

M.R.C. Unit

5 March 1958

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your two letters to say nothing of your postcards. Let me answer the second letter first. I should certainly like to come for the spring term next year as a visiting Professor in the Chemistry Department. I have discussed it with Paul, Odile and Max, and though Max has minor reservations, and though naturally the M.R.C. will have to be consulted, they are all in favour. Next year is especially suitable because we are not likely to have so many visitors then. Naturally I shall be prepared to give some lectures, but we can discuss all that later. It is really very kind of you to have cooked this up for me.

We were very pleased to have the account of the microsomal particles, which gave us a much better picture of what you are up to than the various rumours which had reached us. I passed it on to Iemen, who is actively engaged on the sample you sent him. He tells me that he will be writing to you about his preliminary findings in a day or so.

As you will have heard Sydney has relatively pure sheaths, and George and Sewell think they have relatively pure tail fibres, but the definitive experiment - to show that the h locus alters the fingerprint - has yet to be done. Sydney and Bob Horne have shown that the cores have a fine hole, say 20 Å diameter, down their middle. Mahlon and I, with help from John Smith, are now actively working on the chemistry of the soluble RNA, but so far our only results are very preliminary. Seymour is tackling one of the abnormal haemoglobins as an exercise. Incidentally last week I sent off to Alex a set of good coordinates for poly A, which we should now try to write up. We are likely to have some trouble from Bear and Morgan, but I will write separately about that.

Sydney and I visited Maurice last week. He seems much more cheerful, and appears to be making a much better job of clearing up DNA. There was an evening symposium here on muscle, with Weber and both Huxleys, in which the Huxley model went over in a big way.

You will be amused to hear that in February I gave three public lectures at U.C. London on "The Nucleic Acids" which were crowded out. Also that in the evenings we (mainly Sydney) have

given a short sharp course on simple modern genetics to Fred Sanger, Iwen, Maurice Reece, Brian Hartley and some of their students. We also had a one-day meeting with Ponte, Pritchard and Bob Edgar on small-distance recombination. After tea today Paul will give us a talk on Nucleic acid.

Incidentally Fred, in collaboration with Bruce Stocker is starting to work on the flagella protein from Salmonella, in the first instance to develop his new ideas about amino acid sequence determination, but we hope to slip in a little genetics later, though fine mapping looks difficult.

Sydney has had some newish ideas about coding, which we will tell you about when they are a little tidier. I have to give a talk on this subject at the end of May in French in Paris, so help me.

We are, at long last, moving into our new lab. in the hut, which gives us a little more space, but Mahlon and I will probably have to leave the Molteno at Easter.

Gabrielle and I have had German Measles, Jacqueline has mumps, Odile is covered with spots of unknown origin but otherwise we are all well. We hear news of some of your problems from Helga.

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